



Transport for NSW

Aboriginal Art Strategy

A message from the Deputy Secretary



“We should strive to provide a Connection to Country, integrating Aboriginal sense of place, wisdom, creativity and story into a project’s urban design”

(TfNSW 2020)

In July of last year, Transport for NSW (TfNSW) launched its Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2021.

One of the key actions cited in the plan was to “Develop and implement a Transport Cluster Aboriginal Art Strategy.”

This “Transport for NSW Aboriginal Art Strategy” delivers on our commitment to key Aboriginal engagement objectives.

Aboriginal Art can take many forms including painting, designs, stories, songs, carvings, sculpture, film, music, poetry, theatre, cultural iconography, dance and others.

Aboriginal artists sacrifice their time to preserve, protect and express the living and vibrant Aboriginal culture they are a part of and should be respected for their important role in the community.

Aboriginal Art provides a means of cultural expression and is a vehicle for the maintenance and transmission of culture. There is also strong evidence of how the Aboriginal Arts sector provides substantial economic, social and cultural benefits.

Aboriginal people and communities as well as the broader community share in these benefits and are enriched by them.

The rich cultural narratives within our NSW Aboriginal community provide us with a generational opportunity to create Transport “places” that hold a sense of meaning. Places, that our customers wish to interact with as opposed to just moving through.

Achieving this will require strong partnerships between our staff, construction contractors, urban designers and the Aboriginal Arts community.

The Aboriginal Art Strategy is designed to facilitate and foster these partnerships and I commend it to you.

Joost de Kock

Deputy Secretary

Customer Strategy and Technology

Acknowledgement of Country

Transport for NSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands across NSW and pays respect to Elders past and present.

Many of the transport routes used today, including our railway lines, roads and water crossings follow the traditional Songlines, trade routes and ceremonial paths in Country that our nation's First Peoples followed for tens of thousands of years.

Project Teams

Acknowledging the Project Teams responsible for this Aboriginal Art Strategy including Transport's Aboriginal Engagement Team and the Transport Social and Economic Policy Team.

We would also like to acknowledge other Transport staff, Aboriginal artists and Create NSW for providing input that helped to shape this strategy.

Artwork Acknowledgement

Some of the Aboriginal iconography used in this Aboriginal Art Strategy was sourced from the following artworks with permission.



Corroboree by Saretta Fielding

I am a Wonnarua Aboriginal woman born in Sydney, Australia. My artworks are reflective of traditional sand engravings found throughout Wonnarua Country. In my artwork, I aim to evoke emotion, enhance connection to spirit and Country and invite the viewer to ponder and experience something new.

Corroboree tells the story of my Clan and the unbreakable spiritual tie that links us together across generations, connecting us as one proud people of the Wonnarua Nation. It depicts our Corroboree, where we gather together in song, dance, storytelling and celebration. The painting's central interconnected circles are symbolic of Elders and their placement at the top and centre of the canvas reflects their position of respect and leadership in the community. The lines radiating from them embrace the women, children and clan members. The vibrant and strong colour of the artwork aims to place the observer into the life, movement and sound of Corroboree.



Coffs Harbour by Alison Williams

I am a descendant of the Gumbaynggirr tribe, live on the Coffs Coast and have been practicing art professionally for approximately 30 years.

The centre red circle leading in and out of the painting represents Coffs Harbour making its way through the three hills. The white dots gathering around the centre of the circle represent the Coffs Harbour community.

The blue layers in the painting represent centuries old middens and symbolize the Gumbaynggirr connection to the land, whilst the lower track in the painting represents community growth leading to new campsites (water) and places to gather.

The dancing shadows at the bottom of the painting represent official ceremony, blessing & protection of place by Gumbaynggirr people who contribute to Coffs Harbour. The tally marks at the base of the painting commemorate Elders past & present with cultural markings specific to Gumbaynggirr nation.

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Transport for NSW
Reconciliation Action Plan



Transport for NSW
Principles and Framework
for Aboriginal Engagement
Ngiyani Winangaybuwan Bunmay



Transport for NSW
Aboriginal Cultural Protocol



Transport for NSW
Aboriginal Art Strategy



Aboriginal Art Insights

There are approximately

386

Aboriginal Arts professionals
working in NSW

(ABS 2016)

27%

of Aboriginal people aged 15
years or over describe
themselves as having
participated in arts or crafts,
writing or telling stories and
music, dance or theatre

(ABS 2006)



Definitions

Aboriginal

Aboriginal person means a person who:

- i. is a member of the Aboriginal race of Australia, and
- ii. identifies as an Aboriginal person, and
- iii. is accepted by the Aboriginal community as an Aboriginal person.

For the purpose of this document, use of 'Aboriginal' is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Culture

Ways of being, doing, expressing and relating to others, that are at the centre of Aboriginal identity. Aboriginal culture is living and continually evolving in harmony with the spirit of its peoples.

Aboriginal Art

Painting, design, dance, songs, performance, sculpture, poetry, film, writing, craft making and other arts based activity by an Aboriginal person that is created to express and maintain Aboriginal culture.

Aboriginal Arts practice is handed down through generations, language groups and Aboriginal nations. Aboriginal Art is a way of showing who you are, where you come from and your relationship to your Country and people.

Aboriginal Art Co-design

A two-way learning process where an Aboriginal artist assists project staff to learn and understand Aboriginal culture and in turn, staff invite the Aboriginal artist to learn about urban design, construction and other Transport projects so that both parties come away from the exchange with new knowledge, respect and trust for each-other.

Country

A physical area or region that holds special cultural significance and meaning for an Aboriginal person including, but not limited to, a birthplace, family home, local area, hunting or fishing region, place of ceremony, or an area that forms part of a songline.

Designing with Country

An Aboriginal knowledge led, culture-centric design process that brings together the physical, human and intangible characteristics of a certain country to inform an improved design process that is in harmony with country and community.



Why Aboriginal Art?

Acknowledging the importance of Reconciliation that brings Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together to review, understand, heal and re-express their shared history.

Opportunities are now emerging to move into “Participation” where Aboriginal businesses are deliberately and intentionally supported to increase their economic and social participation in the growth of NSW.

This Aboriginal Art Strategy asks Transport for NSW staff to participate in the creation of a positive and supportive environment for Aboriginal Arts practice as “business as usual” across the cluster.

Aboriginal Art - 10 Guiding Principles

Expression	Aboriginal Art is an expression of personality, spirituality and creativity that assists Aboriginal people to make a deep connection to culture. Aboriginal Art may be created by an Aboriginal person for their own use, to capture an instance of story, place, space or time.
Inclusion	The creation of Aboriginal Art involves all levels of Aboriginal society. Whilst there are certain stories, symbols, dances and knowledges that may be held by Aboriginal women and others by men, the whole community including children, are expected to participate in the creation and maintenance of Aboriginal Arts practice.
Communication	Communication of Aboriginal Art is made richer by the participation of other people, including non-Aboriginal people, who are able to witness the art form, share in its message, reflect on its meaning and spread awareness about the vibrancy of Aboriginal culture with their friends and colleagues.
Culture	Aboriginal Art can be “multi-dimensional” in the sense that there may be parts to it that exist outside of the physical domain - for example in the “dreaming” or other spaces, places or times that resonate with the artist and the message they are expressing.
Respect	Aboriginal Art is created with reverence and meaning by Aboriginal artists who are serious about their practice and the cultural importance of their creations for the community. The showing of respect is a two-way process where Aboriginal artists respect the audiences of their art, and the audience respects the sincerity and commitment of the Aboriginal artist to their art form.

Aboriginal Art - Guiding Principles cont'd

Diversity

Aboriginal Art can take any number of creative formats and should not be seen as only painting or design. Staff should consider the diversity of Aboriginal Arts practice and identify how different aspects might be incorporated into their project. For example, cultural designs could be incorporated into built form or be a part of lighting and digital displays in tunnels or stations, whilst arts performances could be included into planning for a launch event.

Stewardship

Aboriginal people are cultural stewards for a large range of symbols, totems, designs, stories, arrangements, plants, dances, knowledges, laws, songs and languages that they are committed to preserve and protect. Aboriginal Arts practice provides a way for some of this information to be communicated in a culturally appropriate manner to the broader community.

Designing with Country

Working closely with Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge holders to co-create design solutions that celebrate Aboriginal narratives, culture and symbols in ways that enrich the community and create a new sense of place.

Reconciliation

Aboriginal Art has a key role to play in joining Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people into narratives that contribute to greater mutual understanding, empathy and commitment to a shared future. Sometimes this may involve sharing of past truths that evoke challenging memories. However the process of communication and listening can foster environments of trust, truth, tolerance and inclusion that promote intergenerational healing for the whole community.

Sustainability

The placement of Aboriginal Art into Transport infrastructure should consider an appropriate and sustainable life-cycle for the art and incorporate any maintenance required to preserve the integrity of the art form and its cultural narratives.

**Designing with Country means allowing
Country, its shape, form, colours, peoples
and waters to lead the design process.**

George Shearer



Four Flames Aboriginal Art Governance Framework

Country

Country leading the Aboriginal Art planning process

Culture

Local culture at the centre of Aboriginal Art on Country

Co-design

A two - way exchange of knowledge between artist and staff

Community

Harmonising differences & growing opportunities

Guiding Principles informing, supporting

In the Aboriginal community, fire is a symbol of change & regrowth and also an opportunity to get together, yarn and learn from others.



Country



Connect with Country

Connect with the Aboriginal people of the local area and learn about the Country.

Establish a relationship

Establishing meaningful relationships with the Aboriginal artist and other community members as required.

Commence with a clear vision

Commence discussing your project with a clear vision about how the Aboriginal art is going to add value to your design and construction.

“Local emphasis is highly important”

Catherine McBean



Culture



Be prepared to listen

Avoid entering the Aboriginal artist relationship with fixed ideas about local Aboriginal culture. Allow yourself to be educated by the artist.

Seek a diversity of views

There is likely to be a diversity of traditional Aboriginal knowledge at any one location or time.

Understand the cultural narratives

Allocate time to understand the different Aboriginal cultural narratives about the place where the artwork is to be installed.

“There has been an Aboriginal history in every area of NSW” Danie Mellor, Aboriginal Artist



Co-design



Respect the roles

Respect the roles that each person is playing, whether they be artist, urban designer, construction contractor or Transport for NSW staff.

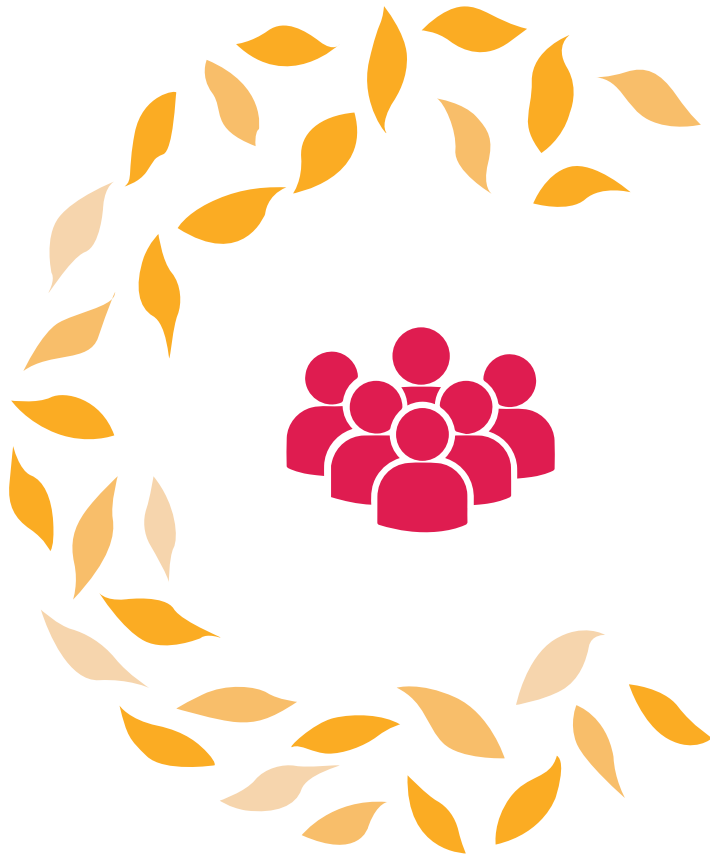
Demonstrate flexibility

Create an environment where the artist is comfortable to express their ideas and culturally contribute to the direction of the artwork.

Share your knowledge

Actively pursue a two-way sharing of knowledge during the process so the Aboriginal artist, urban designer, construction contractor and Transport for NSW staff all complete the project with new awareness and domains of expertise.

“We should be trying to introduce Aboriginal Art to all of our significant infrastructure projects.” James Riley



Community



Inspire the community

Inspire the community with your approach to the artwork.

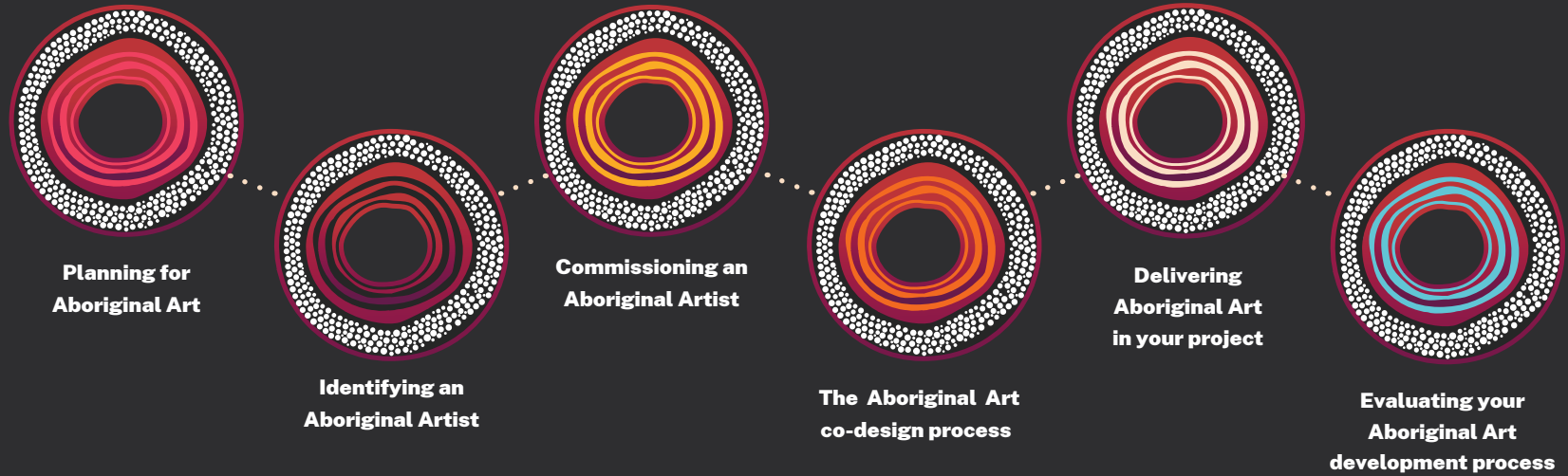
Tell a story

Ensure that the Aboriginal cultural narratives are expressed in ways that can be understood by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Customer experience

Use attribution signs, digital technology (where possible) and other formats to enhance the Aboriginal Arts customer experience.

Aboriginal Art Commission Protocols



Aboriginal Art Planning Protocol

Business Case

Commencement of the Aboriginal Art planning process should be considered during development of the Transport Business Case, that is a crucial first step in determining the commercial, social and community justification for a new project, program or the enhancement of existing Transport assets.

Staff should engage with Aboriginal team members to consider the inclusion of Aboriginal Art in the following sections of the business case: Urban Design approach, Social Return on Investment, Aboriginal Participation, Aboriginal Procurement, Placemaking and Amenity, Local Participation, and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

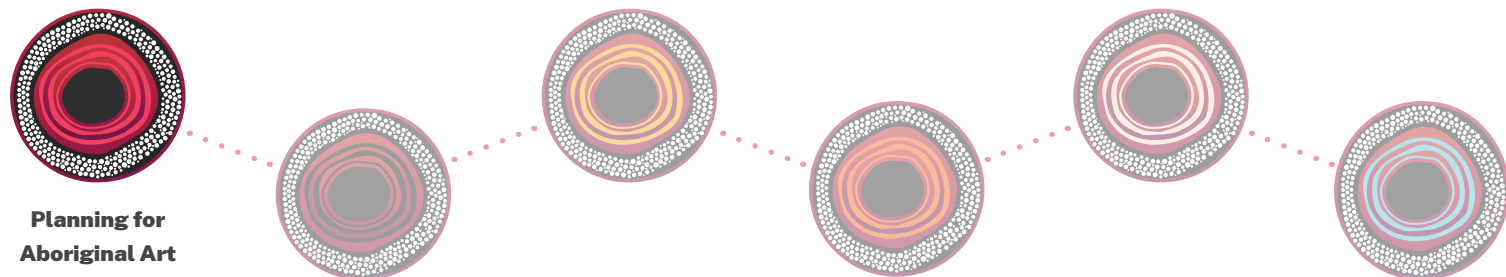
Project Sourcing

Project sourcing, tender development are important operational stages that lay down detailed requirements for what is to be developed, how the construction will take place, how risks will be mitigated and how the community should be involved from inception to project completion. Contractors and tender respondents vary in their experience regarding Aboriginal Art integrations in Transport projects. Moreover, government Aboriginal policy requires tender respondents to describe how they intend to grow local

Aboriginal participation and employment as part of the delivery of the project in their Aboriginal Participation Plan.

Accordingly, Transport for NSW tender and procurement staff should include where possible, Aboriginal Art into the tender specification, delivery contract and gate planning process for the project.

Care should be taken by staff to assess the budget against the size and type of artwork required to ensure the Aboriginal Art is appropriately scoped and commissioned.



Identifying an Aboriginal Artist Protocol

Consult

There are a variety of ways that an Aboriginal Artist can be identified to support your project. Rather than taking it upon yourself to single-handedly choose an Aboriginal artist, it is sometimes easier to share this responsibility with others who have experience with Aboriginal artists.

First, reflect on the location of where your Aboriginal Art design or performance is intended to occur. Consider asking the Transport for NSW Aboriginal Engagement Team about what “Country” it is occurring in and the relevant Aboriginal language group that belongs to that area.

Second, commence a process of engaging with Aboriginal people in that community. In the first instance, it can be beneficial not to connect directly with Aboriginal artists but rather other Aboriginal people who have knowledge about the artists and preferred styles in that community.

Build knowledge

You could begin with the Local Aboriginal Land Council or else go directly to the local Aboriginal traditional knowledge holders.

Seek a variety of viewpoints about the relevant experience of different artists, their capacity to deliver, their commitment and professionalism.

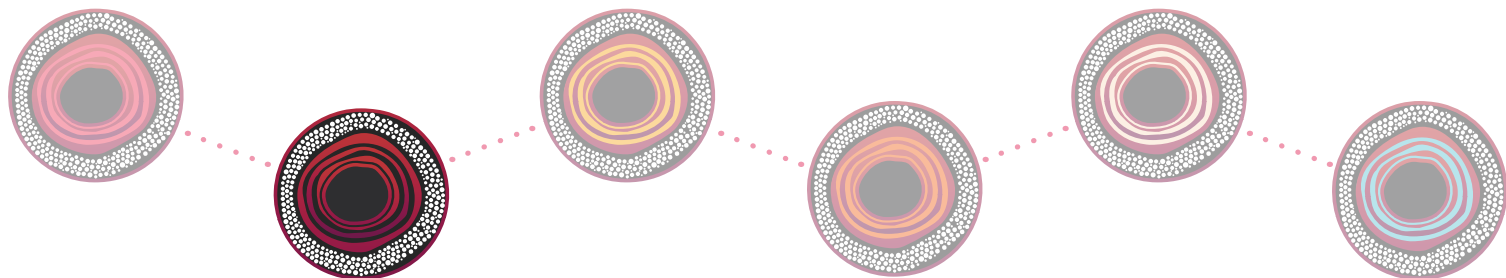
It’s important to note that the local artist who is the best known or getting the most commissions isn’t necessarily always the right choice for your project, as you may need to take other factors into account such as the requirements of your project, timelines, identified artforms, how the artist approaches the working relationship and their degree of flexibility.

Artist Database Resources

Aboriginal artists can also be identified from database searches at Supply Nation www.supplynation.com.au or the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce www.nswicc.com.au. Sydney Trains also has an Aboriginal Artist database list that is accessible to Transport for NSW staff.

“I like to work with Aboriginal artists to help them translate how to take an artwork off the canvas to something else.”

Saretta Fielding



Identifying an
Aboriginal Artist



Image courtesy Public Art Works

“Shorelines and Storylines”
Aboriginal Artist: Jessica Birk

Balgowlah Aboriginal noisewall
Image courtesy Ballarinji

Commissioning an Aboriginal Artist Protocol

Direct Source or Tender?

Government Aboriginal participation policy allows staff to direct source an Aboriginal artist to work in your project up to a project value of \$250,000 (Treasury NSW 2021).

Ideally, the decision about whether to direct source or run a tender process needs to balance the size of the commission, the risk to the project and also the capacity of artists to respond to and quote for the work.

If the pool of local Aboriginal Artists you are considering for the work are not yet procurement approved with NSW government, then it may be advantageous to contract an Aboriginal Arts intermediary or broker. Such Aboriginal Arts brokers will ideally be procurement approved Aboriginal organisations who have experience managing and working with Aboriginal artists.

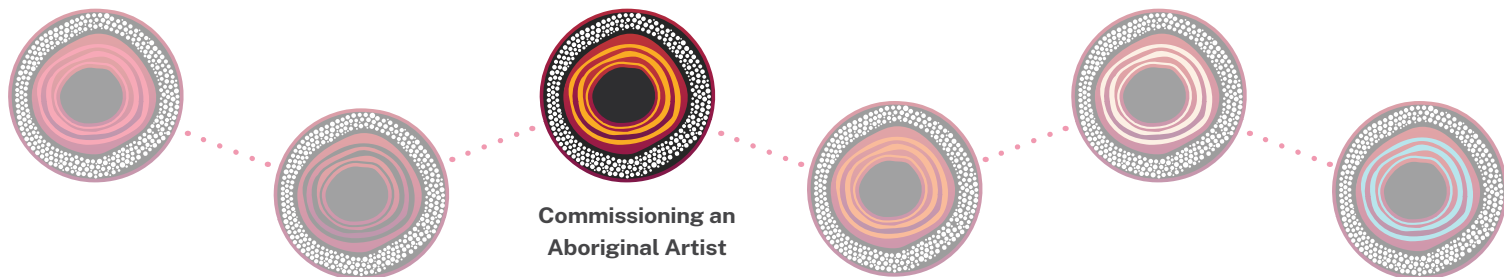
Aboriginal Arts broker organisations can play a key role in interpreting the brief, curation and supporting the artist to translate their cultural vision into the technical requirements of the project. Arts broker organisations also help with managing the relationship between the artist, contractors, urban designers and the cluster.

On the other hand, if you are able to identify a local Aboriginal artist from the Country in which your development is to occur and they are of suitable experience, knowledge and have the appropriate business structures in place, then staff may prefer to direct source the artist.

It is also advisable to keep a written record of the process of consultation and selection you have used to commission the Aboriginal artist in your project.

“Incorporating Aboriginal Art into a new project should be business as usual”

Stacy Mitchell





Aboriginal Artist: Digby Moran
Image courtesy publicArt Works
Photographer: Tao Jones

Aboriginal Arts Design and Interpretation Protocol

Audience and Design Envelope

The design process should bring together the needs of the project and the cultural knowledge and experience of the Aboriginal artist.

Appropriate Aboriginal Art design occurs with the audience in mind. For example, will the location allow large numbers of customers to observe the art very briefly? Does the location also permit customers to experience the work up close and personal for a longer time period that allows for more content-rich messages?

Additionally, design and construction principles are important to consider such as what is the building envelope where the design is to be fixed? What are the proposed materials that will be used in the fabrication of the Aboriginal Art to be installed? Will the design be permanent or temporary? How will the installation and finished state of the design impact on the safe flow of people through and past the site?

Cultural Narratives and Storytelling

The process of commissioning Aboriginal Art is an opportunity to play an important part in growing community knowledge about Aboriginal culture.

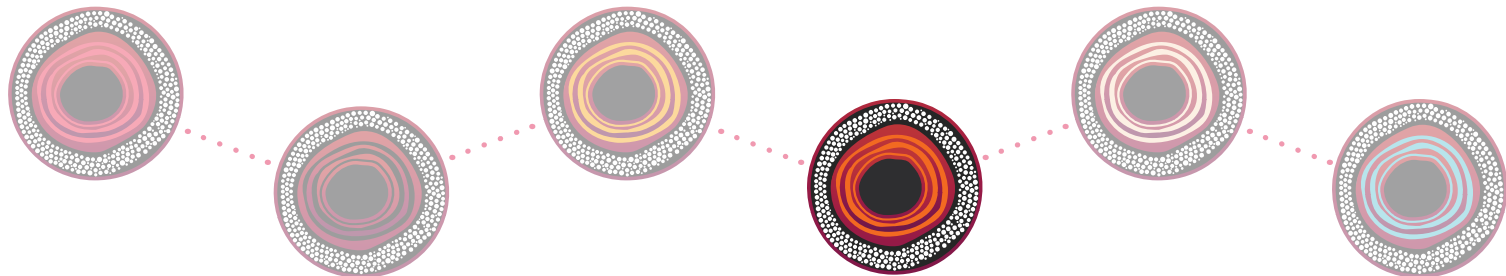
For this reason, staff and contractors should plan not only for the installation and development of Aboriginal Art, but also for the transfer of cultural narratives and stories that inform, support and energise the meaning and message of Aboriginal Art.

Transport for NSW has existing attribution guidelines (Transport Arts Guideline) for the design and layout of interpretive signs and plaques that may be placed next to an Aboriginal Artwork in the public domain (TfNSW 2019).

Staff are also required to install and link site-based QR codes with online curated content about the Aboriginal artwork on Transport for NSW's Arts website.

“Good design grows from the landscape and how people live in it. It works with nature and Country not against it.”

Gareth Collins



The Aboriginal Art co-design process



Aboriginal Artist: Garrigal Culture

NAIDOC celebration dance performance
Sydenham Station Upgrade

Aboriginal Artist Relationship Protocol

Managing the relationship

Whether agency staff are working directly with an Aboriginal Artist or instead through a broker organisation, it is recommended that a face-to-face meeting is undertaken to grow trust and confirm that the artist has clear expectations about what is being asked of them.

For example, milestone payment schedules could be an important topic for some Aboriginal artists who may not be in a position to cash-flow their involvement in the project with their own funds over a long period of time.

It is particularly important to gain agreement on how the Aboriginal art will be used by the project. For example, staff may wish to use a given Aboriginal design in other projects but unless such uses were included in the initial agreement, staff will need to seek out the artist or broker and negotiate a new use for the work.

Pre installation

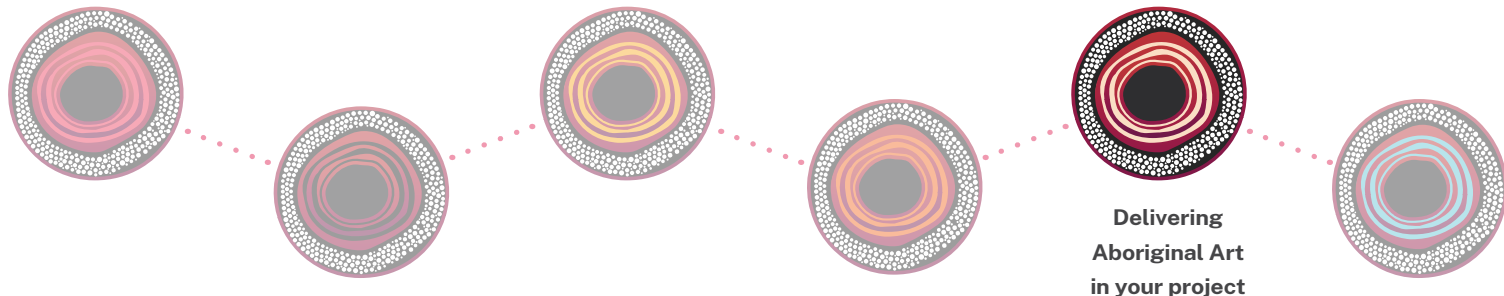
Whilst design and construction timelines may not allow for development of an artwork on site, the Aboriginal artist may require time on site to review the area, perform traditional ceremonies and learn about the proposed uses for the development to gain a spiritual understanding about how their artform is to create a bridge between the embedded Aboriginal culture of the area and the new uses of the site.

Installation

Once the art work has been completed offsite the Aboriginal artist may ask to perform ceremony at the installation or fixing of their artwork on the site to ensure the relevant cultural ancestors give their blessing. In this event, it is important that construction personnel and cluster staff on site have had cultural awareness training and are culturally competent enough to provide a supportive and positive environment for the artist.

“Good public art should say something new each day to a transport customer, providing a depth of experience and encouraging repeat visitation”

Elisabeth Peet



“It’s important to gain agreement on how the Aboriginal art will be used by the project”



Aboriginal Arts Credit Protocol

Credit and Site launch

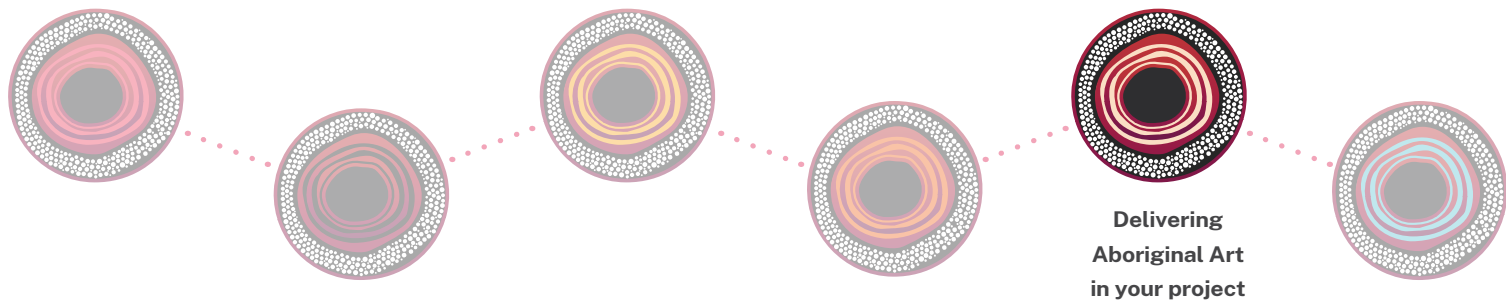
The issue of credit is likely to mean a lot to Aboriginal artists who value the outcome of their work not only by what they are paid but also by the extent to which the cultural messages of their art are conveyed to the broader community.

If you are planning a formal launch of your project, consider inviting Aboriginal staff in your team and the Aboriginal artist who participated by contributing their art. Moreover, the Aboriginal artist may be able to assist you identify appropriate local Aboriginal people to perform a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country at your event.

Ultimately, it is the cluster or contractor's choice about the roles that people play at launch events. Notwithstanding, by including your project's Aboriginal artist at your launch, you are taking a firm step in cementing the two-way trust and relationship with your artist for the longer term.

**“Meeting your
RAP obligations
is about action”**

Jason Douglas,
Aboriginal Artist



Evaluating your Aboriginal Art Development Process

Evaluation

After your Aboriginal Art's procurement has been completed, it is worth conducting an evaluation with the Aboriginal Artist to determine how successful the co-design process was for the project.

In other words, was there a genuine sharing of knowledge during the relationship so that the Aboriginal artist exited with a greater understanding of construction, urban design, fabrication etc?

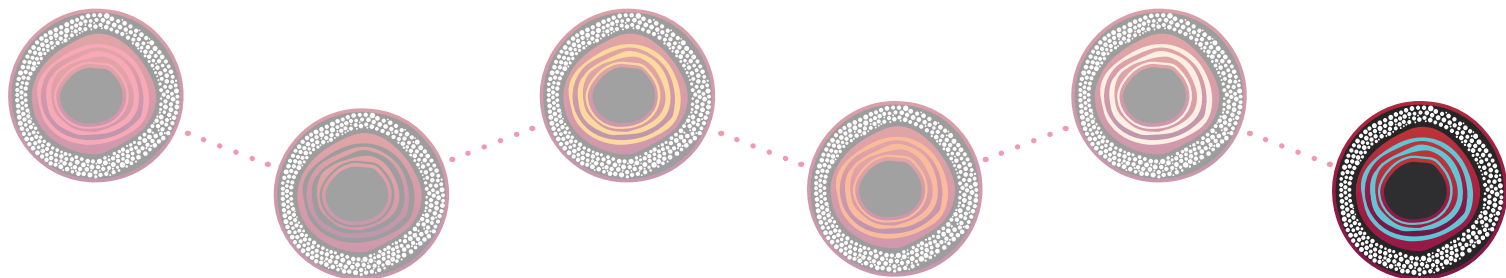
Of equal importance, did staff, contractors and urban designers increase their knowledge about the Aboriginal culture and customs of the area during the project?

If the Aboriginal artist created only digital designs for the project, effort should be made to evaluate their experience and whether there was a two-way knowledge transfer between themselves and project staff.

Completed Aboriginal Art project evaluations should be added to a centralised Aboriginal Transport Arts database so that reflections and lessons learned may be shared amongst staff.

“We are committed to working collaboratively with NSW Aboriginal communities.. to share and present their stories in appropriate places.”

Future Transport 2056



“it is worth conducting an evaluation with the Aboriginal Artist to determine how successful the co-design process was for the project”



Key Resources



Transport for NSW's Aboriginal Guiding Principles and Framework for Aboriginal Engagement assists with the process of organising, managing, delivering and evaluating effective engagement with Aboriginal people.



Transport for NSW's Aboriginal Cultural Protocol assists staff with a number of practical hints and tips for engaging with Aboriginal people in communities.



Designing with Country is a publication by the NSW Government Architect that helps to examine what we mean by “Designing with Country” in an Aboriginal context.

Key Resources



The Transport Arts Guideline lays out the approach to be used by staff for the design of artist attribution plaques, inclusion of artist information on the TfNSW website and information about the Transport Arts register.



Transport for NSW's Beyond the Pavement is a multi-modal urban design resource that lays the foundation for how design and art should be integrated into major roads and other Transport infrastructure in NSW.

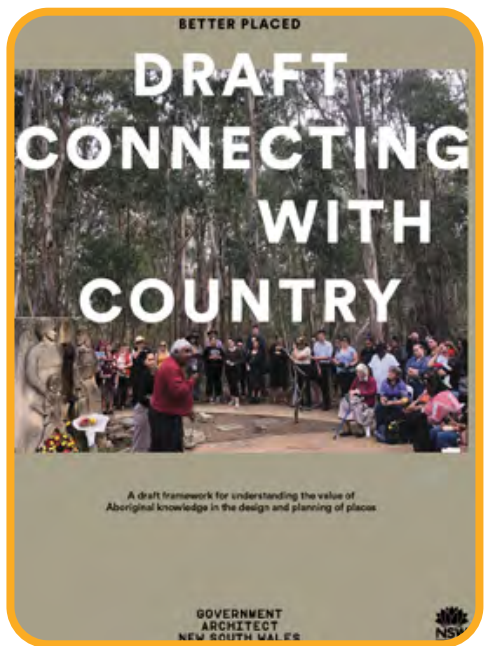


Transport for NSW's Sydney Metro Art Masterplan is a comprehensive resource that covers the planning, curation, commissioning and installation of public art in Sydney's urban rail environment.

Key Resources



Transport for NSW's Creativity Guidelines are a practical, step by step process about how to deliver public art in a public transport context for Transport for NSW.



NSW Government Architect's Draft Connecting with Country is an exploration of "Connecting with Country" that includes a number of urban design and construction case studies.



Investing in Aboriginal Art

Informed by consultation feedback, the following Aboriginal Arts Investment Criteria and framework is designed to assist the prioritisation of Aboriginal Arts investment and expenditure across the Transport cluster

"Supporting Aboriginal people on Country to contribute towards the design process is really important"

Aboriginal Artist consultation

"We need Aboriginal Arts and culture planning that connects up different Transport sites"

Transport for NSW staff consultation

"When costing, Aboriginal Art is often the 'bolt on' at the end. We need to bring the human, arts and culture elements into engineering thinking at the beginning of a project"

Transport for NSW staff consultation





**Aboriginal Arts
Investment
Criteria &
Framework**

Country

Helping the wider community connect with the Aboriginal Country they are on



People and Culture

Growing understanding about Aboriginal people and culture



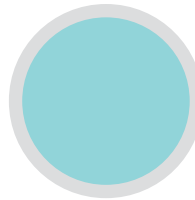
Innovation

Seeking innovative ways to communicate Aboriginal narratives

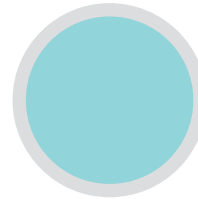


Country

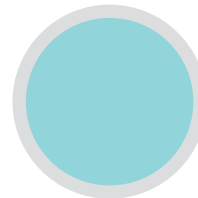
Helping the wider community understand which Aboriginal Country they are in



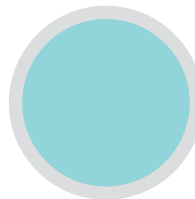
Signposting of Aboriginal Country and places across NSW



Place-based Aboriginal Art installations that fit within the building envelope of the development



Celebrating dance, theatre, song and other on Country Aboriginal artforms

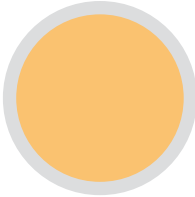


Providing a spread of Aboriginal Arts investment in communities across NSW

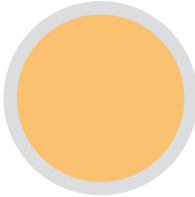


People and Culture

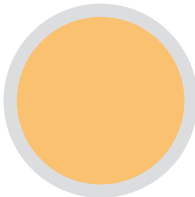
Growing understanding about
Aboriginal people and culture



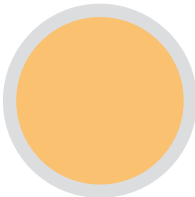
Helping people learn about Aboriginal
Traditional Knowledge and wisdom



“Pride of Place” and visibility of
Aboriginal Art on public transport
infrastructure where appropriate



Curatorial excellence and
design of transformational,
yet also practical, Aboriginal
cultural experiences using art



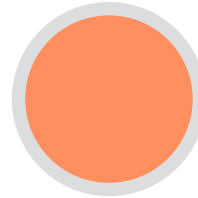
Valuing the personal experiences of the
broader community as they interact
with Aboriginal culture on Transport
infrastructure and environments

“Aboriginal Art provides a way to help the broader community
understand more about our history and culture.”

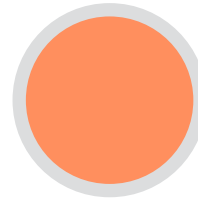
Deborah Swan

Innovation

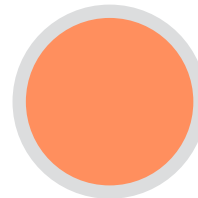
Seeking innovative ways to communicate Aboriginal narratives



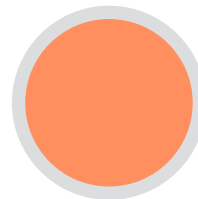
Use of innovative technology to facilitate the interpretation of Aboriginal narratives and improve customer experience and understanding



Supporting contemporary and historical Aboriginal narratives that honour the personal journeys of Aboriginal people in NSW



Use of Aboriginal place names where appropriate



Creation of joined-up trails of Aboriginal narrative experiences across major transport nodes

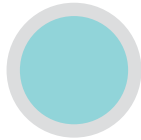
“..with digital you could have an art trail. It’s a nice thing to tell the story behind our Transport brand and how we value community.”

Karen Mork



Aboriginal Arts Investment Concept Design Examples

Country
Helping the wider community understand which Aboriginal country they are in



Signposting of Aboriginal Country and places across NSW



Place-based Aboriginal Art installations that fit within the building envelope of the development



Celebrating dance, theatre, song and other on Country Aboriginal artforms



Providing a spread of Aboriginal Arts investment in communities across NSW



People and Culture
Growing understanding about
Aboriginal people and culture



Helping people learn about Aboriginal
Traditional Knowledge and wisdom



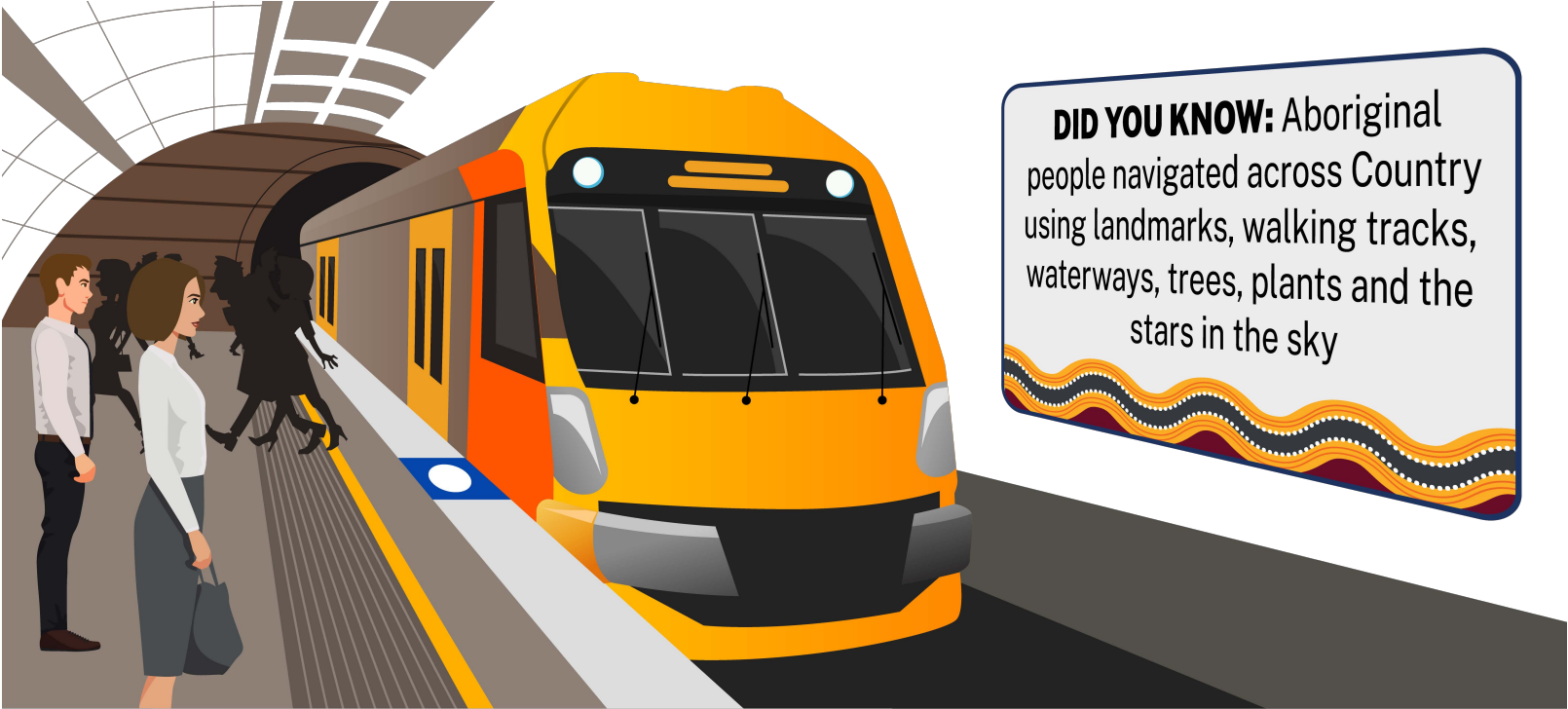
“Pride of Place” and visibility of
Aboriginal Art on public transport
infrastructure where appropriate



Curatorial excellence and design of
transformational, yet also practical,
Aboriginal cultural experiences
using art

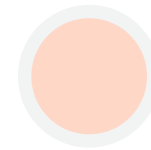


Valuing the personal experiences of the broader
community as they interact with Aboriginal culture
on Transport infrastructure and environments

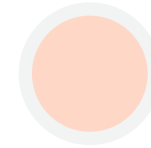


Innovation

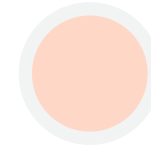
Seeking innovative ways to communicate Aboriginal narratives



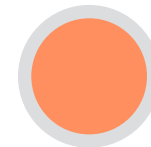
Use of innovative technology and digital apps to facilitate the interpretation of Aboriginal narratives and improve customer experience



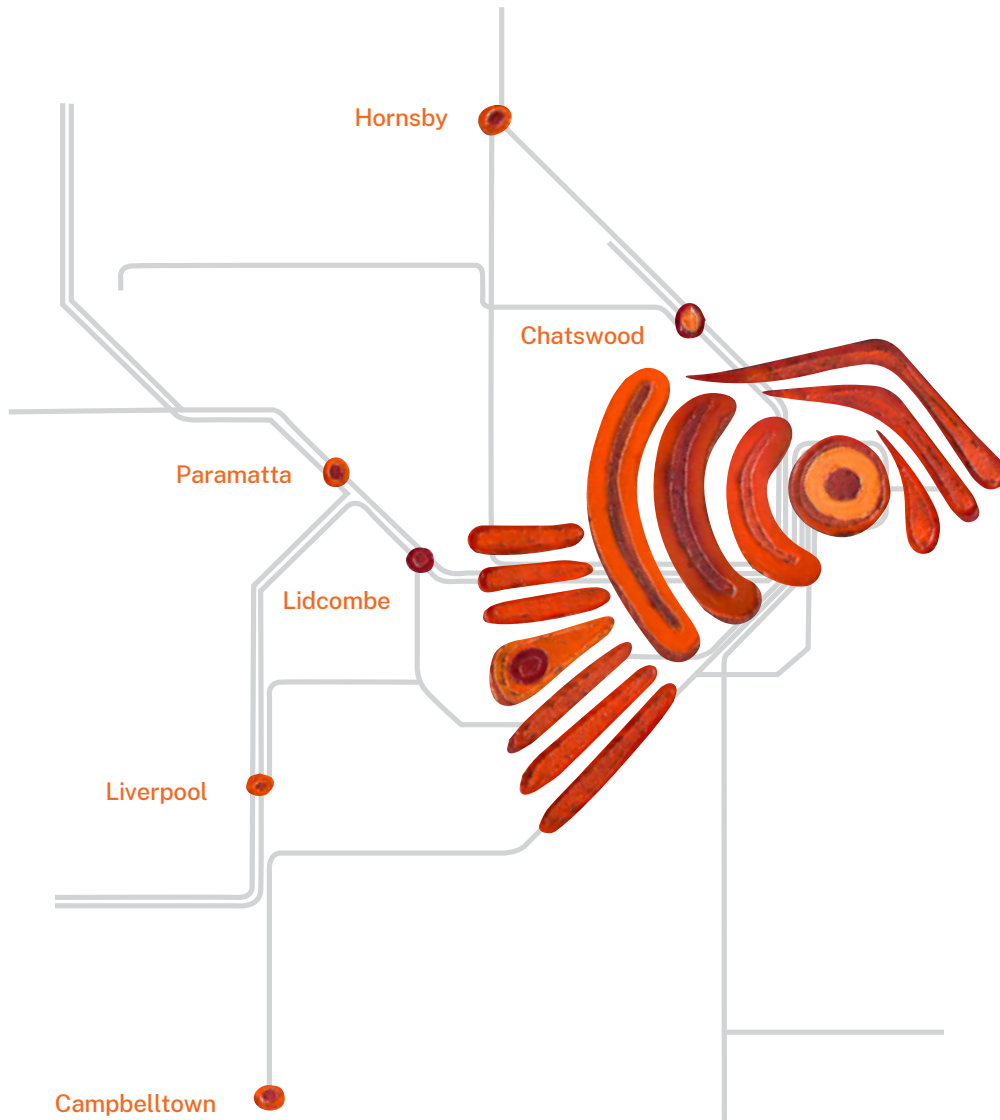
Supporting contemporary and historical Aboriginal narratives that honour the personal journeys of Aboriginal people in NSW



Use of Aboriginal place names where appropriate



Creation of joined-up trails of Aboriginal narrative experiences across major transport nodes.



SYDNEY RAIL NETWORK

Purpose:

The “Corroboree Investment Strategy” draws from the Aboriginal cultural practice of Corroboree that was a seasonal gathering of the largest numbers of Aboriginal people to exchange culture and share ideas.

Application:

The Corroboree Strategy was informed by feedback from the consultation process and asks Transport for NSW to consider focussing a portion of the cluster’s Aboriginal Arts investment

towards that part of the network which carries the largest number of NSW people and therefore represents the greatest opportunity for impact, cultural change and community benefit.

Moreover, the Corroboree Investment Strategy supports a network organising process for Aboriginal Arts investment so that there is a gradual joining up of activity to create Aboriginal Art trails of unique customer experiences.

Sample Aboriginal Art Participation Plan

Vision

How will Aboriginal Art add value to your project?

Aboriginal Art will add value to the (insert name of project) because our project team wishes to design with Country and support an Aboriginal artist and our staff to share in a two-way exchange of knowledge and the creation of a cultural place or performance.

Aim

What is the aim of using Aboriginal Art to add value to your project?

We are seeking to incorporate Aboriginal Art into our project to engage with local Aboriginal people and provide an Aboriginal artist with the opportunity to creatively input into our development process that will culturally enrich our project and its community outcomes.

Objectives

What are the broader objectives of using Aboriginal Art in your project?

The broader objectives for our Aboriginal Art integration are consistent with the TfNSW Aboriginal Art Strategy framework and include: Planning with Country, Engaging with Aboriginal culture, Co-designing with Aboriginal artists and facilitating improved community use of the completed site.

Strategy

What strategies will you action to integrate Aboriginal Art in your project?

We will form an Aboriginal Art project team made up of staff from the project, Aboriginal TfNSW staff and other arts & curatorial experts if required. The team will connect with our Aboriginal contacts in the local (insert name of Aboriginal community) and use the feedback to assist us to develop an artist brief.

We will then conduct a procurement process and commission an Aboriginal artist to work with us on the project.

Sample Aboriginal Art Participation Plan cont'd

Outcomes

What are the intended outcomes of incorporating Aboriginal Art into your project?

We feel that new cultural value will be created for the development by incorporating Aboriginal Art, leading to an improved sense of place where people from all backgrounds feel comfortable to learn more and experience NSW Aboriginal culture.

Project Plan

How are you planning to deliver your Aboriginal Art integration?

Following the development of our Aboriginal Art Participation Plan and Aboriginal artist commissioning, we will work closely with the artist to ensure they are supported to deliver the artwork consistent with our agreement. We will endeavour to keep an open line of communication with the Aboriginal artist and will encourage frank discussion about the project so any issues may be dealt with in a timely manner.

Timeline

Please indicate a likely timeline for your Aboriginal Art integration?

Our project team feels that the following timeline is realistic for our Aboriginal Art integration

Date: complete Aboriginal Art Participation Plan

Date: form Aboriginal Art Project team

Date: commission Aboriginal artist

Date: commence artwork development

Date: finalise artwork development

Date: launch artwork (if applicable)

Date: evaluate our Aboriginal Art process

Date: maintenance program or decommission

Budget

Please indicate the likely costings of your Aboriginal Art integration?

Our project team has calculated that a budget of (insert budget) is appropriate for our Aboriginal Arts integration.

Our budget line items are likely to include: community consultation, develop project scope, commission artist, purchase of materials, technical advisers, artist advisers, cultural advisers, installation, launch, evaluation, maintenance and or decommissioning.

Sample Aboriginal Art Participation Plan cont'd

Management

How will your Aboriginal Art integration be managed?

We will manage our Aboriginal Art integration on a weekly basis and remain in regular communication with the Aboriginal artist & the project's design team and engineers to ensure the timelines of all parties remain in sync or are informed if an issue arises so it may be satisfactorily addressed.

Lifecycle

Is your Aboriginal Art integration of a permanent or temporary nature? If permanent please indicate your maintenance plans for the artwork. If temporary please outline the artwork decommission process.

Our Aboriginal Art integration is not permanent. We anticipate a productive life-cycle for the artwork of (insert years). We have included a clear decommission process in the agreement with the Aboriginal artist.

Or - Our Aboriginal Art integration is designed for permanent installation. We have included extra maintenance capacity to maintain the art as part of the overall maintenance schedule for the site.

Interpretation

What are your plans to assist the community interpret the meaning of the Aboriginal artwork or performance?

Our project team will follow the Transport Arts attribution guidelines and erect a plaque next to the artwork. In addition, a QR code will be fixed next to the plaque that will link mobile users to more content about the work in the words of the artist and hosted on the Transport for NSW arts website.

Evaluation

How do you intend to evaluate the process of your Aboriginal Art integration?

The Aboriginal Art Project team will investigate the co-design process to evaluate whether a two-way learning and exchange of information took place between the Aboriginal artist and the rest of the project team. Qualitative feedback will be collected via web form and summarised in a final Aboriginal Arts evaluation report by the project team.

Aboriginal Art Commission Checklist

Tick	Action
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop an Aboriginal Art Participation Plan for your project or program with a clear vision.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Include the Aboriginal Art Participation Plan in the business case and tender documentation with an appropriate scope and project budget.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign roles and responsibility for the delivery of Aboriginal Art amongst your project team ensuring that team-members have support from Aboriginal staff and Arts/Design staff. Form this group into an Aboriginal Arts Project team.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify the Aboriginal Country or local area where the art installation or performance is to occur. Reach out to Aboriginal contacts in that community and enquire about the availability of local artists.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Depending on the project size and other relevant factors, the Aboriginal Arts Project team can either direct source* or run a tender process to identify a suitable Aboriginal artist for the project.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that the commission agreement with the Aboriginal artist contains the following sections: aim, objectives, site of installation or performance, material of installation / finished artwork, heritage and planning constraints that impact the project, intellectual property, traditional and cultural knowledge, payment milestones, expectations, conflict resolution, credit, expected artwork lifecycle, maintenance manual, decommissioning and evaluation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conduct a face-to-face meeting with the Aboriginal Artist to confirm they have understood all the requirements and also to provide them with the opportunity to ask questions to the Arts Project team prior to commencement on the project.

*Aboriginal Procurement Policy 2021 (NSW Treasury) allows the direct sourcing of an Aboriginal business up to a project value of \$250,000.

Conflict Resolution Process

Conflict

A conflict with an artist could relate to misunderstandings over contract conditions such as payment, credit, use of Intellectual Property (IP), delivery times, materials, creative direction, cultural reasons or even because the artist feels disconnected or disrespected by the project team. We would like to outline the following approach to resolving conflicts with artists.

1. Clarify

Clarify and clearly summarise the source of the conflict, where it is coming from and the events that gave rise to it. This may take some research and require direct communication with the artist, as sometimes the presenting conflict is masking deeper issues that are unresolved in the project.

Empathic listening and hearing the grievances of the artist and acknowledging their perspectives without judgement is likely to produce the right environment and a level of trust.

2. Mediation

Sometimes, the process of active listening can draw the issue out and allow for easy resolution. On the other hand, if the conflict is more serious and entrenched, staff are advised to organise a date and time for mediation with the artist. Ask the artist what time would work best and whether they would like to have anyone else present.

Roles will need to be identified and someone who is suitably skilled will need to play the role of facilitator for the mediation that supports the parties to reach agreement.

If the artist consents, the mediation process should be documented. For example with an audio recording of proceedings and also by someone taking notes.

3. Resolution

The resolution of the conflict is likely to involve actions that each party agrees to. These actions should be recorded and delivered to both parties as soon as possible following the mediation so each party is able to implement their agreed commitments.

Decommission Process

Permanent or Temporary Art?

At the earliest possible stages of your Aboriginal Art project, it is important to consult with the project's design and construction teams to determine the fabrication materials to be used, placement of the art on site and also whether the artwork will be permanent or temporary?

Permanent and temporary Aboriginal artworks require a decommission process to ensure that the art is satisfactorily removed before it degrades and loses its professional finish and structural integrity.

Planning for Decommissioning

The planning process for decommissioning an Aboriginal Artwork should be part of the scope and agreement-making that informs development of the initial contract with the artist. In this way, the needs of the artist to culturally and respectfully decommission their creation can be balanced with the project's other site requirements and timelines.

Variation

Staff should expect variation in the expressed decommission preferences from artist to artist and project to project. For example, some Aboriginal artists may prefer that the decommissioned artwork is donated to a community organisation, or returned to them, or, if they have no use for it, sent for waste collection.

If the agreed preference for the art is that it be sent to a community organisation, then this organisation should be consulted about whether it consents to having the artwork, about the likely time the artwork will be decommissioned or made available and who is the best contact person or designated receiver for the artwork.

Agreement

Contract managers should ensure that all relevant decommission information is included in the initial contract with the Aboriginal artist such as: duration of artwork on site, decommission notification process, method and responsibility for decommission, safe transport and the designated receiver of the artwork.



Future Directions

Future Directions

In order to support the ongoing implementation of the Aboriginal Art Strategy as well as build collaborative partnerships between our staff, construction contractors, urban designers and the Aboriginal Arts community, Transport for NSW will explore further opportunities to:

- Enhance consistency in the way the Aboriginal Art Strategy is interpreted and applied across different projects and programs in Transport for NSW
- Facilitate cluster-wide technical support and resources to assist Aboriginal Artists when scaling up to deliver art for major TfNSW projects

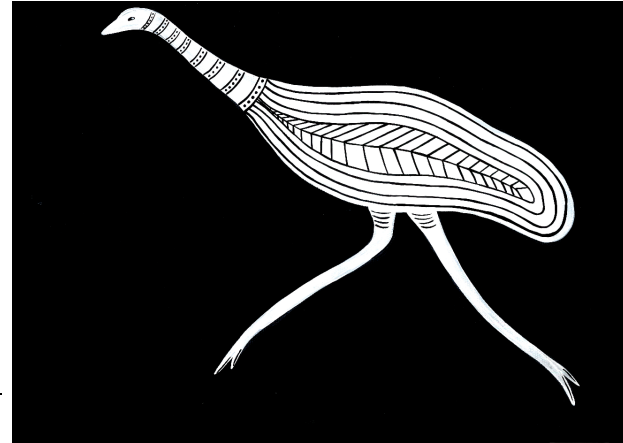


Case Studies

Case Study

Mariyung Trains

'Mariyung' the Darug word for Emu, is the naming inspiration for Transport for NSW's new Intercity Fleet of trains. Like the emus of the Dreaming stories, Mariyung trains will travel across significant areas of Darug country. From the Sydney CBD towards the Blue Mountains and through Wiradjuri country in the west, Awabakal country in the north and Dharawal country in the south. There is symbolism both in the Mariyung name and the naming process, acknowledging the diversity of Transport's people and our ongoing commitment to acknowledging Aboriginal culture across our operations.



Leanne Mulgo Watson

To promote greater appreciation about the cultural significance of the new fleet's name, Transport commissioned Darug artist Leanne Mulgo Watson to create artwork that tells the story of Mariyung.

Inspired by her family, Darug country, the environment and her life experiences, Leanne created a series of paintings on card in black, white and ochre. Representatives from Transport for NSW then worked closely with Leanne to map out how her art would be placed on the trains, to ensure the story was presented appropriately. Leanne's artwork speaks of travel across the night sky, of meeting places and footprints of Mariyung on the earth.

Transport for NSW also funded the development of a cultural animation to help our customers understand the Mariyung story that is narrated by Leanne's daughter Rianna. This beautiful yet simple video tells the story of Mariyung in the night sky and the way she guides us through the seasons and time.

"When the dreamtime began and there were only stars
The emu lay in the night sky waiting for the dreaming to begin
In Darug language, the emu is Mariyung
Like Mariyung this train runs through ancient lands from
Awabakal, Dharawal, and Wiradjuri country and many countries in between
As Mariyung travels through the nura she appears in the night sky
To guide us through our seasons and time all across Australia
So we know where we need to be in our Country." Leanne Mulgo Watson



Case Study

Newcastle TfNSW office

Credit and Site launch

NSW Aboriginal artist, Saretta Fielding was contracted to help create a sense of place and culture for Transport for NSW's Newcastle office.

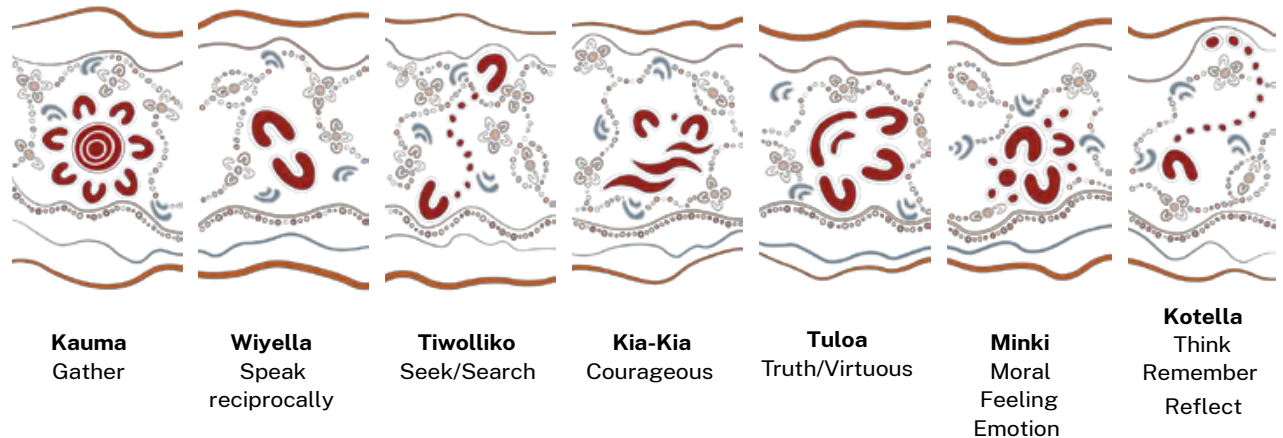
Saretta says, "Being invited in at the early stage of the project made a real difference.

I had time to go to the site, see the space, connect with the building and visit the local Aboriginal traditional knowledge keepers.

We had fortnightly meetings with the project team so I could show my progress sketches.

Working closely with Transport staff, we also developed a signage approach for the offices. The creation of aluminium signage was a new area of learning for me and felt very collaborative."

Yarntiin Kauma All Together (Awabakal Language)



In the words of the artist:

This artwork is reflective of gathering, connection and inclusion, bringing a welcome to all and celebrates the journey of reconciliation through traditional symbolism depicting people gathering and stepping stones.

The design acknowledges the Awabakal People as the traditional custodians upon the land, hills and plains flowing across both the top and bottom of the design. A blue flowing strip highlights the East Coast and Hunter river (Conquun), while stepping stones interwoven throughout the design highlight the journey we take together towards reconciliation through shared vision, partnership and collaboration. Seven red ochre symbols reflect the values of respectful relationship and good governance, as we all journey forward together.



“In the end, when the process was finished, I was able to look at the work and feel Aboriginal people coming alive in this space”

Saretta Fielding, Aboriginal Artist

Case Study

Development of an Aboriginal Engagement landing page and portal

Why an Aboriginal Engagement portal?

To create a repository of all Aboriginal related information in the transport cluster covering topics such as:

- resources to engage Aboriginal people
- procurement – Aboriginal businesses
- Aboriginal participation in construction

How Aboriginal businesses were engaged:

The Aboriginal Procurement policy allows the direct engagement of Aboriginal businesses up to \$250K on the basis they can demonstrate value for money and have capability to deliver the work required. Two Aboriginal businesses Noble Brands and Saretta Fielding were procured to develop the artwork and portal concepts.

The artist:

Saretta Fielding is an artist, entrepreneur and activist. A member of the Wonnarua Nation, of the Hunter Valley Region in New South Wales, she is the founder of Saretta Art and Design and Malang Indigenous Corporation, a not-for-profit supporting the sustainable economic and social inclusion of Aboriginal people in the community.

Welcome to the home of Aboriginal engagement

Get support, advice and strategy on how to build relationships between Aboriginal communities and Transport



Cultural advice

Request a Welcome to Country, learn how to give an Acknowledgement of Country or get cultural advice



Aboriginal procurement

Find an Aboriginal supplier for a wide range of goods and services



Safety programs and services

Find out more about programs that keep Aboriginal people safe on the roads and get a drivers license



Meet the Aboriginal Engagement team

Learn about the work we do transforming communities in NSW



Cultural & heritage

Assess the impact of infrastructure projects on cultural heritage



Aboriginal land interest

Learn who to contact for Aboriginal Land Claims or Native Title matters and how to begin consultation

“Transport for NSW’s Aboriginal Engagement Portal is a one-stop shop for Aboriginal Engagement and Services” Warren Steadman

For all intranet queries and feedback, email [digital publishing](#)

[Roads and Maritime website](#) | [Transport website](#) | [Transport intranet](#) | [Roads and maritime intranet](#)
Transport for NSW acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land, and respect Elders past, present and future.

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Case Study

Signposting Yaegl Country in Northern Rivers

Colourful new signs are popping up on roads along the east coast as the NSW Government pilots a program acknowledging Aboriginal Country.

Deputy Premier and former Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, Hon. Paul Toole MP, said the statewide pilot of the new signs has commenced on Yaegl Country in the NSW Northern Rivers region and Darkinjung Country on the Central Coast.

“Many of the transport routes we take for granted today follow traditional Aboriginal Songlines, trade routes and ceremonial paths in Country followed by Aboriginal people for tens of thousands of years,” Mr Toole said. “These include roads, rail lines and water crossings around the state, so it’s a step forward to recognise Aboriginal

lands and routes crossings by incorporating Acknowledgement of Country signs at important locations.”

Member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis said the six signs unveiled across the Northern Rivers feature an artwork that reflects the Yaegl cultural landscape.

“Installing these signs showcases and promotes the deep connection Yaegl people have with Country and helps develop understanding in the broader community,” Mr Gulaptis said. “Transport for NSW has worked closely with the Yaegl and Darkinjung communities while preparing this pilot program, to develop the signage and decide on the best locations to display them.”

Yaegl Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC CEO Bill Walker thanked Transport for NSW for taking the time and effort to make the project happen “Yaegl people always have and always will have the physical and spiritual connection to the land, rivers and sea and will keep maintaining their culture through Caring For Country,” Mr Walker said. “Yaegl Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC takes pride in building the capacity of its members and Native Title Holders to achieve best cultural, economic and social outcomes for both short and long term basis. Education, training and employment is the key to self-determination.”

“It’s a step forward to recognise Aboriginal lands and routes crossings by incorporating Acknowledgement of Country signs at important locations”

Hon. Paul Toole



References

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